Austrian Pledge

Having hosted and chaired the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons from 8-9 December 2014 and in light of the important facts and findings that have been presented at the international conferences in Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna, Austria, solely in her national capacity, and without binding any other participant, wants to go beyond the summary just read out. After careful consideration of the evidence, Austria has come to the following inescapable conclusions and makes the subsequent pledge to take them forward with interested parties in available fora, including in the context of the NPT and its upcoming 2015 Review Conference:

Mindful of the unacceptable harm that victims of nuclear weapons explosions and nuclear testing have experienced and recognising that that the rights and needs of victims have not yet been adequately addressed,

Understanding that the immediate, mid- and long-term consequences of a nuclear weapon explosion are significantly graver than it was understood in the past and will not be constrained by national borders but have regional or even global effects, potentially threatening the survival of humanity,

Recognizing the complexity of and interrelationship between these consequences on health, environment, infrastructure, food security, climate, development, social cohesion and the global economy that are systemic and potentially irreversible,

Aware that the risk of a nuclear weapon explosion is significantly greater than previously assumed and is indeed increasing with increased proliferation, the lowering of the technical threshold for nuclear weapon capability, the ongoing modernisation of nuclear weapon arsenals in nuclear weapon possessing states, and the role that is attributed to nuclear weapons in the nuclear doctrines of possessor states,

Cogniscent of the fact that the risk of nuclear weapons use with their unacceptable consequences can only be avoided when all nuclear weapons have been eliminated,

Emphasizing that the consequences of a nuclear weapon explosion and the risks associated with nuclear weapons concern the security of all humanity and that all states share the responsibility to prevent any use of nuclear weapons,

Emphasizing that the scope of consequences of a nuclear weapon explosion and risks associated raise profound moral and ethical questions that go beyond debates about the legality of nuclear weapons,

Mindful that no national or international response capacity exists that would adequately respond to the human suffering and humanitarian harm that would result from a nuclear weapon explosion in a populated area, and that such capacity most likely will never exist,

Affirming that it is in the interest of the very survival of humanity that nuclear weapons are never used again, under any circumstances,

Reiterating the crucial role that international organisations, relevant UN entities, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, elected representatives, academia and civil society play for advancing the shared objective of a nuclear weapon free world,

Austria regards it as her responsibility and consequently pledges to present the facts-based discussions, findings and compelling evidence of the Vienna Conference, which builds upon the previous conferences in Oslo and Nayarit, to all relevant fora, in particular the NPT Review Conference 2015 and in the UN framework, as they should be at the centre of all deliberations, obligations and commitments with regard to nuclear disarmament,

Austria pledges to follow the imperative of human security for all and to promote the protection of civilians against risks stemming from nuclear weapons,

Austria calls on all states parties to the NPT to renew their commitment to the urgent and full implementation of existing obligations under Article VI, and to this end, to identify and pursue effective measures to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons and Austria pledges to cooperate with all stakeholders to achieve this goal,

Austria calls on all nuclear weapons possessor states to take concrete interim measures to reduce the risk of nuclear weapon detonations, including reducing the operational status of nuclear weapons and moving nuclear weapons away from deployment into storage, diminishing the role of nuclear weapons in military doctrines and rapid reductions of all types of nuclear weapons,

Austria pledges to cooperate with all relevant stakeholders, States, International Organisations, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movements, paliamentarians and civil society, in efforts to stigmatise, prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons in light of their unacceptable humanitarian consequences and associated risks.